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WHSR NOTIFY BOB GATES

ANALYSIS NOTE AG/WA

SOVIET COMMENT ON U.S. ELECTION RESULTS

INITIAL SOVIET REACTION TO THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HAS INCLUDED CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE REASONS FOR THE OUTCOME BUT LITTLE SPECULATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS UNDER A CARTER ADMINISTRATION. SOVIET COMMENTATORS EXPRESSED MIXED FEELINGS OVER THE FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE ASSUMED DURING THE CAMPAIGN, COMBINING PRAISE FOR HIS PROMISES TO WORK WITH MOSCOW TO EASE INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS WITH CRITICISM OF HIS ALLEGED COURTING OF THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX" IN SEEKING VOTES. BUT IF PAST PRACTICE IS ANY INDICATION, MOSCOW WILL GIVE THE PRESIDENT-ELECT THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT ON HIS FOREIGN POLICY INTENTIONS. EARLY INDICATIONS OF THIS ATTITUDE WERE TASS' HIGHLIGHTING OF CARTER'S REASSURANCES REGARDING THE CONTINUITY OF U.S. POLICY AND HIS OWN COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE 4TH, AND KULAKOV'S OCTOBER REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY REMARKS THE FOLLOWING DAY OBSERVING THAT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION CONSTITUTED EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR "REALISTIC TENDENCIES" IN FOREIGN POLICY. ONLY A WEEK BEFORE THE ELECTION, BREZHNEV HAD INTIMATED THAT MOSCOW EXPECTED NO IMPORTANT SHIFTS IN U.S. POLICY IN THE EVENT OF A CARTER VICTORY.

ON-FILE NSC  
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APPLY

SOVIET COMMENTATORS HAVE INTERPRETED PRESIDENT FORD'S LOSS TO THE CHALLENGER AS A RESULT OF CONTINUING U.S. ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS OF FORD'S MISHANDLING OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES DURING THE CAMPAIGN. IN PARTICULAR, THE PRESIDENT WAS ACCUSED OF BEING "INCONSISTENT" ON DETENTE. THE FIRST COMMENTARIES IN PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA, THE MOST IMPORTANT SOVIET DAILIES, APPEARED TO STRESS THE PRIMACY OF DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES IN THE OUTCOME; IZVESTIYA SPECULATED THAT THE ECONOMY PLAYED A "LARGE, IF NOT DECIDING" ROLE IN THE VOTERS' CHOICE. VALENTIN ZORIN, ONE OF SOVIET RADIO AND TELEVISION'S VETERAN OBSERVERS OF THE UNITED STATES, TOLD SOVIET LISTENERS THE DAY AFTER THE ELECTION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S "CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS" CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL DETENTE AS WELL AS VOTER DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ECONOMY HURT THE REPUBLIC CAUSE. TWO COMMENTARIES ON MOSCOW RADIO'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FOREIGN BROADCASTS FOCUSED MORE ON THE FOREIGN POLICY FACTORS IN THE OUTCOME. ONE OF THESE COMMENTARIES SAID THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S GRADUAL SHIFT FROM STRONG SUPPORT FOR DETENTE TO A "WATERED-DOWN VERSION OF THE REAGAN PLATFORM" OVER THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN SHOWED VOTERS THAT HE WAS LESS A MAN OF PRINCIPLE THAN A MAN OF EXPEDIENCE.

EARLY SOVIET COMMENTARIES ON THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEXT HAVE AVOIDED ANY SERIOUS SPECULATION ON PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S PROBABLY FOREIGN POLICY. TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY HAVE TOUCHED ON THE PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS UNDER A CARTER ADMINISTRATION, THEY HAVE CONFINED THEMSELVES MAINLY TO REAFFIRMATIONS OF MOSCOW'S OWN DESIRE TO CONTINUE PURSUING BETTER RELATIONS.

EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN SOVIET COMMENTATORS REGULARLY EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH CARTER'S "REALISTIC" POSITIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY, NOTABLY ON RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW, THE VALUE OF A NEW SALT AGREEMENT, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A \$5-7 BILLION CUT IN THE U.S. DEFENSE BUDGET. BY THE CLOSING WEEKS OF THE CONTEST, HOWEVER, SOVIET COMMENTATORS HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF WHAT THEY SAW AS BOTH CANDIDATES' ATTEMPTS TO APPEAL TO THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM THROUGH STRESS ON THE NEED TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIET UNION FROM A "POSITION OF STRENGTH."

NEVERTHELESS, JUST A WEEK BEFORE THE ELECTION, CPSU GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV, IN HIS SPEECH TO THE 25-27 OCTOBER PLENUM OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE, TOLD HIS AUDIENCE THAT MOSCOW EXPECTED NO IMPORTANT SHIFTS IN U.S. POLICY AS A RESULT OF THE ELECTIONS. HE SAID THAT DESPITE THE "GENERAL" AND "CONTRADICTIONARY" NATURE OF THE CANDIDATES' REMARKS ON FOREIGN POLICY, BOTH SUPPORT AN EASING OF WORLD TENSIONS AND, WITH EITHER AS PRESIDENT, THE UNITED STATES WOULD "TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ACTUAL ALIGNMENT OF FORCES" IN THE WORLD AND HENCE CONTINUE TO "SEARCH FOR ACCORDS" WITH MOSCOW.

CPSU SECRETARY AND POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBER BORIS PONOMAREV WAS ASKED ABOUT SOVIET REACTION TO CARTER'S ELECTION DURING A 3 NOVEMBER PRESS CONFERENCE IN LONDON WINDING UP A TRIP TO BRITAIN. IN A RESPONSE NOT YET PUBLICIZED BY SOVIET MEDIA BUT REPORTED BY WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES, PONOMAREV SAID THAT MOSCOW IN HIS OPINION SHOULD "DEVELOP RELATIONS FURTHER" WITH THE UNITED STATES UNDER A CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THE FIRST OFFICIAL COMMENT BY A SOVIET LEADER WAS FYDOR KULAKOV'S REMARK IN HIS 5 NOVEMBER KREMLIN SPEECH ON THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY THAT THE U.S. ELECTION, LIKE THOSE IN ITALY AND WEST GERMANY, SHOWED THAT THE WESTERN PUBLIC FAVORS "REALISTIC TENDENCIES" IN FOREIGN POLICY. HE WENT ON TO EXPRESS MOSCOW'S CONTINUING BELIEF IN THE "GREAT IMPORTANCE FOR ALL MANKIND" OF A NEW U.S. - SOVIET AGREEMENT LIMITING  
STRA No Objection to Declassification in Full 2010/07/16 : LOC-HAK-218-6-6-7